

EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Westbrook, ME

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Westbrook for a Brownfields Pilot. Westbrook was also selected to receive additional funding for assessments at brownfields properties to be used for greenspace purposes. Situated in the southern coastal section of Maine, just west of Portland, Westbrook (population 16,074) is a small, historic mill town struggling with the legacies of its industrial heritage and falling short in its efforts to reclaim lost business from the region's ever-expanding strip malls. The Presumpscot River, which flows through the city's center, has fueled Westbrook's mill economy for more than 200 years.

Like so many older industrial communities, most of Westbrook's lumber, textile, and pulp and paper mills have shut down in recent years. The most significant of these closings is that of portions of the Sappi Pulp and Paper Mill, which has long served as the city's largest employer, and in 1998 represented 26.7 percent of the municipal tax base. In April 1999, Sappi announced that it would cease all pulp operations and dramatically reduce its paper manufacturing capacity. This had tremendous impacts on the local economy, including the elimination of hundreds of jobs, the reduction of local tax revenue, and the idling of more than 100 acres of prime industrial land.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Westbrook, ME

Date of Announcement:
May 2000

Amount: \$200,000
Greenspace: \$50,000

Profile: The Pilot targets the Foye Mill and Sacarrappa Island brownfields sites on the Presumpscot River and the Maine Rubber site in the city's downtown area. For greenspace purposes the Pilot targets the former wastewater treatment Lagoon and another publicly owned lot.

Contacts:

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Regional Brownfields Team
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(617) 918-1424

Visit the EPA Region 1 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region01/remed/brnflid/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

OBJECTIVES

Ultimately, the city's Brownfields Revitalization Initiative plans to leverage public and private funds to attract "clean" businesses to the city, create good jobs, increase the tax base, improve recreational and commercial access to the riverfront, and generate public pride in the city. The City of Westbrook will use Pilot funding to perform assessments in order to develop plans for cleanup, commercial redevelopment, open space, and public use of the Foye Mill and Sacarrappa Island brownfields sites on the Presumpscot River and the Maine Rubber site in the city's downtown area. The Pilot will institute a program to ensure that all members of the Westbrook community are informed about brownfields issues and take an active part in the decision-making process at the targeted lots.

The Pilot will use the greenspace funding to assess and address environmental conditions along the riverfront of the Presumpscot River. The objectives planned to be achieved with the greenspace funding include expanding and improving access to the river, boosting downtown river waterfront revitalization efforts, and creating new recreational outlets for residents by connecting Westbrook's riverfront to other river segments by joining with existing trail networks. One site of particular interest, Westbrook's former Wastewater Treatment Lagoon site, provides direct links to existing regional trail systems and harbors enormous potential to increase recreational enjoyment of the river.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Conducting environmental assessments of the Foye Mill, Sacarrappa Island, and Maine Rubber sites;
- Evaluating cleanup and reuse options for the three target sites;
- Using greenspace funding to conduct assessments at the Lagoon and Mill sites;
- Using greenspace funding to evaluate cleanup and reuse options for the Lagoon and Mill sites that will create recreational areas to increase public access to and use of the river; and
- Developing a community outreach program to involve residents in the decision-making process at the targeted sites.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.